



[I]

Order of the S. Thome Church of Boston 1699

A MANIFESTO

O R

Declaration,

Set forth by the Undertakers of the

New Church

Now Erected in *Boston* in *New-England*, November 17th. 1699.

INASMUCH as GOD hath put it into our hearts to undertake the Building a New Meeting House in this Town for His Publick Worship; And whereas through the gracious Smiles of Divine Providence on this our Undertaking, We now see the same Erected, and near Finished: We think it Convenient, for preventing all Misapprehensions and Jealousies, to publish our Aims and Designs herein, together with those Principles and Rules we intend by GODS Grace to adhere unto.

We do therefore as in the Presence of GOD our Judge, and with all the Sincerity and Seriousness, which the nature of our present Engagement Commands from us, Profess and Declare both to one another, and to all the World, as follows.

[I.]

First of all, We approve and subscribe the *Confession of Faith* put forth by the Assembly of Divines at *Westminster*.

[II.]

We design only the true and pure Worship of GOD, according to the Rules appearing plainly to us in His Word; Conformably to the known practice of many of the Churches of the UNITED BRETHREN in *London*, and throughout all *England*.

We judge it therefore most suitable and convenient, that in our Publick Worship some part of the Holy Scripture be read by the Minister at his discretion.

In all other parts of Divine Worship as (Prayer, Singing, Preaching, Blessing the People, and Administering the Sacraments;) We conform to the ordinary practice of the Churches of Christ in this Country.

A

[III.]

[III.]

[2]

[III.]

It is our sincere desire and intention to hold Communion with the Churches here, as true Churches; and we openly protest against all Suspicion and Jealousie to the contrary, as most Injurious to us.

[IV.]

And although in some Circumstances we may vary from many of them; yet we joyntly profess to maintain such Order and Rules of Discipline as may preserve, as far as in us lies, Evangelical Purity and Holiness in our Communion.

[V.]

In pursuance whereof we further Declare, that we allow of Baptism to those only who profess their Faith in Christ and Obedience to him, and to the Children of such; yet we dare not refuse it to *any* Child offered to us by *any* professed Christian, upon his engagement to see it Educated, if God give life and ability, in the Christian Religion.

But this being a Ministerial Act, We think it the Pastors Province to receive such Professions and Engagements; in whose prudence and conscience we acquiesce.

[VI.]

As to the Sacrament of the Lords Supper, we believe that as the Ordinance is Holy, so the Partakers in it (that it may not be visibly profaned) must be persons of visible Sanctity.

[VII.]

We judge it therefore ~~fitting and expedient~~, that whoever would be admitted to partake with us in this ~~Holy~~ Sacrament, be accountable to the Pastor to whom it belongs to inquire into their knowledge and Spiritual State, and to require the Renewal of their Baptismal Covenant.

[VIII.]

But we assume not to our selves to impose upon any a Publick Relation of their Experiences; however if any one think himself bound in Conscience to make such a Relation, let him do it.

For we conceive it sufficient, if the Pastor publicly declare himself satisfied in the person offered to our Communion, and seasonably Propound him.

[IX.]

We also think our selves obliged in faithfulness to God, our own Souls, and theirs who seek our Communion, to inquire into the life and conversation of those who are so propounded; and if we have just matter of objection to prefer it against them.

[X.]

But if no objection be made, before the time of their standing propounded is expired, it shall be esteemed a sufficient Consent and Concurrence of the Brethren, and the person propounded shall be received to our Communion.

[XI.]

If ever any of our Communion should be so unhappy as to fall into any scandalous Sin (which God by his Grace prevent) we profess all dutiful submission to those Censures, which the Scripture directs, and the Churches here practice.

[XII]

[3]

[XII.]

Forasmuch as the same power that *Admits*, should also *Exclude*, We judge it reasonable, that the Pastor in Suspending or Excommunicating an Offender, have the consent and concurrence of the Brethren.

[XIII.]

We apprehend that a particular Church, as such, is a Society of Christians by mutual agreement, usually meeting together for Publick Worship in the same place, and under the same Ministry, attending on the Ordinances of God there.

[XIV.]

In every such Society, the Law of nature dictates to us, that there is implied a mutual promise and engagement of being faithful to the Relations they bear to each other, whether as private Christians, or as Pastor and Flock, so long as the Providence of God continues them in those Relations.

[XV.]

We moreover Declare our selves for Communion of Churches, freely allowing our Members occasionally to Communicate with other Churches of Christ, and receiving theirs occasionally to the Table of the Lord with us. And in extraordinary cases, when the Providence of God makes it needful, we conceive that any Authorized Minister of Christ, may upon our request, Administer the Sacraments unto us.

[XVI.]

Finally, We cannot confine the right of choosing a Minister to the Male Communicants alone, but we think that every Baptized Adult Person who contributes to the Maintenance, should have a Vote in Election.

Yet it seems but just, that persons of the greatest Piety, Gravity, Wisdom, Authority or other Endowments, should be leading and Influential to the Society in that Affair.

THESE are the Principles we Profess, and the Rules we purpose through the Grace of GOD, to govern our selves by ; and in some of these particulars only, and in no other, do we see cause to depart from what is ordinarily Professed and Practised by the Churches of CHRIST here in *New-England*.
